



HOWARD COUNTY TOURISM NEWS

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Howard County Celebrates 25th Annual National Tourism Week **Four spectacular events exemplify county's ½ billion dollar tourism industry**

(Ellicott City, MD) National Tourism Week (established in 1984) is a collective effort to promote the power of travel through customized events in communities nationwide. The goal is to enhance the country's economy, security and perception, and recognize the cultural and social benefits created by travel and tourism. Who and what is Tourism in Howard County? The Howard County Tourism Council are five marketing professionals together with the hip, hot and happenin' Mom & Pop restaurants like Jordan's Steakhouse, and AIDA Bistro, the "rockstars" in our industry who worked to save Merriweather and the Enchanted forest for generation next, the B&O Railroad Museum: Ellicott City Station that brings international visitors to our charming historic district. Tourism is weekend signature events like the Columbia Triathlon, Wine in the Woods, the Columbia Classic Grand Prix, Columbia Festival of the Arts and Symphony of Lights that attract regional travelers. Tourism is Howard County hotels like the Sheraton Columbia and Turf Valley Resort who generate the over \$3.3m hotel / motel tax create thousands of jobs, generate millions of dollars in tax revenue and are home away from home for business and leisure travelers in Howard County. Below are the most recent statistics from the Maryland Office of Tourism Development for Howard County:

- Tourism generated \$528.72 million in expenditures from domestic visitors in 2006.
- The tourism industry generated over 5,000 direct jobs in 2006
- Tourism generated \$16.1 million in County tax receipts in 2006.

The Howard County Tourism Council through its creative marketing and public relations strategies has successfully lures more tourists to Howard County attractions and signature events, the tourists take home wonderful memories and leave behind tax dollars that are then reinvested into new schools, new roads, new equipment for police & fire all the things that benefit Howard County residents and maintain our outstanding quality of life (recently named #4 America's Best Places to Live, *Money* magazine.) The Howard County Tourism Council works in concert with major County initiatives like being a model green community by promoting the many existing eco-tourism attractions and creating new collateral like the *Howard County Wildlife Driving Tour*. The Howard County Tourism Council is recognized by Howard County Government and the Maryland Office

of Tourism Development as the official Destination Marketing Organization for Howard County, Maryland. The Howard County Tourism Council's mission is to increase, develop and promote tourism in Howard County by featuring the county's unique sites, services, products, people AND OUR SIGNATURE EVENTS:

**THURSDAY – SATURDAY May 15-17, 2008 (8,000 visitors expected each evening)
Preakness Celebration Balloon Festival presented by Talk Radio 680 WCBM**

Join Turf Valley Resort as they host the Hot Air Balloon portion of the Preakness Celebration. Walk through an inflated balloon, enjoy a tethered balloon ride, and watch in awe the Balloon Glow at dusk, all in the name of Preakness! Bring your whole family to this exciting event, as there will be something for everyone. Special children's entertainment, including the Turf Valley PeeWee Preakness, will be sure to wow your children while you browse some of the region's finest quality, hand-made crafts from local vendors. Our restaurants teamed with outside food vendors will offer an array of culinary delights to enjoy throughout the day. If you would like additional information, please call 410-423-0811, www.turfvalleyresort.com

**SATURDAY / SUNDAY May 17 & 18, 2008 (25,000 guests expected)
Wine in the Woods**

Come celebrate the 16th year of an event whose charm and character has aged to perfection. Sample Maryland's finest wines from a souvenir glass; make food purchases from an abundance of high quality, distinctive restaurants and caterers; sharpen your palette by attending wine education seminars; enjoy exceptional works offered by invited artists and craftspersons; and revel in continuous live entertainment on the jazz and main stages. Designated driver program is available. Symphony Woods, Noon until 6 pm, \$25 at the gate, \$20 in advance and designated drivers, 21 and up (ID required), 410-313-7275, www.WineintheWoods.com

**SUNDAY May 18, 2008 (2,300 athletes, 5,000 spectators expected)
Silver Anniversary Columbia Triathlon
Centennial Park, 1.5k Swim - 41k Bike - 10k Run**

The 2008 Silver Anniversary Columbia Triathlon is a qualifying race for Best Of The U.S.A. The Men's Pro entrants field for the Silver Anniversary Columbia Triathlon is going to be the most competitive field in the history of the race! Come see Chris McCormack, 2007's Ironman Hawaii World Champion competing against 2000+ athletes including Greg Remaly, the 2007 Columbia Triathlon Winner, defending his title. Come see the dazzling Desiree Ficker (originally from Potomac, MD) who placed 2nd at Ironman Hawaii 2006 and recently ran in the Olympic Marathon Qualifier in Boston. This is going to be one for the record books as teens, relay teams, a "young" 82 year old and pros all compete in the Silver Anniversary Columbia Triathlon! FREE shuttle service provided by Howard Transit from the Sheraton Columbia to Centennial Park on race day from 4AM-2PM.

**SUNDAY May 18th, 2008
Maryland House And Garden Pilgrimage Explores Oella**

When the historic village of Oella (just over the Patapsco river from historic Ellicott City) opens its doors to Pilgrimage tour-goers this spring, visitors will not only see beautiful homes and gardens nestled in an idyllic woodland setting along the Patapsco River, they will also witness for themselves the fascinating history of this revived textile mill village—a 200-year history that is reflected in almost every corner of the community. The Oella tour takes place rain or shine, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, May 18, 2008.

Tour-goers will see a diverse blend of revitalized historic mill houses and tasteful new homes, including the impressive residential renovation of the original textile mill. The village homes showcase a visual time line and diversity of architecture—both new and old. A total of 12 outstanding sites comprise the May 18th Oella itinerary, and with names like *Riverknoll*, *Little House in the Hollow*, *Granite Hill*, and *Spring Promise*, the tour offers something for everyone. Visitors will even have the opportunity to visit a restored 19th century farm house and working llama farm. Shopping and dining opportunities abound in neighboring historic Ellicott City.